DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 173 539 CE 019 609

AUTHOR	Harmon, Lenore W.
TITLE	The Guidance Needs of Women. Information Series No. 149.
INSTITUTION	Ohio State Univ., Columbus. National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
SPONS AGENCY	Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
BUREAU NO	498AH80003
PUB DATE	79
CONTRACT	300-78-0032
NOTE	22p.; For related documents see CE 019 603-618
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Career Development; Cognitive Development; Counseling Goals; Employment Opportunities; Employment Problems; *Females; *Needs Assessment; *Occupational Choice; *Occupational Guidance; Self Concept; *Sex Discrimination; Sex Role; Sex Stereotypes; *Vocational Counseling

ABSTRACT

Both internal and external barriers prevent women from utilizing equal opportunity. Counselors, teachers, administrators, and researchers must understand the guidance needs of women so that they can help them overcome these barriers. Career and cognitive development theories require individuals to pass through several stages, and according to Maslow's theory, all individuals are subject to the same hierarchy of needs. When counselors are aware of these stages and needs, they can help their female clients first by assessing the status of their development, and then by helping them develop their vocational self-concept. After achieving this goal, counselors can then assess their clients' interests, values, and skills and develop individualized plans for them. The most subtle problem that counselors face is how to present the real barriers that exist in the world of work and in the wife/mother role without discouraging female clients from trying new job roles. Specific recommendations to aid counselors, teachers, administrators, and researchers in comprehending and meeting the guidance needs of women include (1) being aware of the facts of female employment, of the special skill needs of women and of their need for reinforcement; (2) challenging developers of counseling and curricular materials to eliminate sex stereotyping; and (3) developing support groups and programs to develop specific personal skills. (This paper is one in a series of sixteen knowledge transformation papers.) (ELG)

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ED173539

Information Series No. 149

THE GUIDANCE NEEDS OF WOMEN

written by

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1979

CE 019 609

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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FUNDING INFORMATION

Project Title:	National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Dissemination and Utilization Function
Contract Number:	OEC-300-78-0032
Project Number:	498AH80003
Educational Act Under Which the Funds Were Administered:	Education Amendments of 1976, P.L. 94-482
Source of Contract:	Department of Health, Education, and Welfare United States Office of Education Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education Washington, DC
Project Officer:	Paul Manchak
Contractor:	The National Center for Research in Vocational Education The Ohio State University Columbus, Ohio 43210
Executive Director:	Robert E. Taylor
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FOREWORD

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and the Education Amendments of 1976 reflect a national concern over sex segregation in the work force. To overcome this segregation, the legislation provides for funding to deal with the guidance needs of women. Such unique needs are the concern of vocational counselors, administrators, teachers, and researchers alike. This paper focuses on one aspect of the problem, the internal barriers within women which prevent them from achieving occupational success in nontraditional jobs. These more subtle internal barriers must be addressed at the same time the more obvious external barriers are being removed.

"The Guidance Needs of Women" is one of a series of 16 papers produced during the first year of the National Center's knowledge transformation program. The 16 papers are concentrated in the four theme areas emphasized under the National Center contract: special needs subpopulations, sex fairness, planning, and evaluation in vocational education. The review and synthesis of research in each topic area is intended to communicate knowledge and suggest applications. Papers should be of interest to all vocational educators, including administrators, researchers, federal agency personal, and the National Center staff.

The profession is indebted to Dr. Lenore W. Harmon for her scholarship in preparing the paper. Recognition is also due Dr. Ruth P. Hughes, Iowa State University, Dr. Carolyn Litchfield, University of Kentucky, and Dr. Marla Peterson, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, for their critical review of the manuscript. Dr. Carol P. Kowle, research specialist, supervised the publication of the series. Ms. Jo-Ann Cherry coordinated editing and production.

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INTRODUCTION

Few persons are against "equal pay for equal work." Moreover, it is easy to support equal pay for equal work without addressing the problems of equal opportunity in a substantial way. This attitude has persisted, as work done by white men is often regarded as superior to work done by members of minority groups and women because of the types of opportunities open to the latter. It might also be said that the white male is the type of worker most often encouraged by environment, social group, education, and opportunity to enter high-level jobs. One result is sex stereotyping in employment (Oppenheimer, 1968).

In 1974, women comprised 39 percent of the labor force. At the same time, women also comprised 77 percent of all clerical workers and 58 percent of all service workers, but only 19 percent of managers and administrators and 4 percent of craft and kindred workers (U.S. Department of Labor, 1975). Equal pay for equal work is almost a moot issue in many occupations because, for the most part, women do not do work which is considered equal. This trend is emphasized if minority group women are considered separately. In 1973, 12 percent of employed women were minority groups members. Yet, they comprised 25 percent of all clerical workers, 25 percent of all service workers, and 15 percent of all private household workers (U.S. Department of Labor, 1975).

Women's earnings also indicate that they are either not receiving equal pay or not doing work which is judged to be equal. In 1975, median earnings for males employed full-time year round were $11,500, whereas for women they were $6,500. The women's median salary was at or below 64 percent of the men's median in all major occupational groups, including professional and technical fields, where the women's median was 54 percent of the men's. In 1973, women's median salary was 56 percent of that of men. Even women college graduates earned only 59 percent of the median salary of men (U.S. Department of Labor, 1975). Over the last 10 to 15 years these have become familiar figures. They have been attributed to innate differences between the sexes in ability, interests and motivation; learned differences between sexes in skills, interest and motivation; and the powerless political status of women.

These facts imply certain problems for women in the work place. For many women, they imply a lack of prestige, position, and financial security. The implications apply not only to the single woman supporting herself or the homemaker working for luxuries, but also to the female head of household who worked full-time year round for a median family income of $8,800 and the working wives and mothers who contributed to a total family income of less than $7,000 in 1973. For the same period, male heads of household had a median income of $14,970 (U.S. Department of Labor, 1975).

One effect that sex segregation has on the work force is to reduce the pool of qualified candidates for jobs. The unique approaches women might bring to many occupations are also lost. For example, in a popular novel, The Disappearance by Philip Wylie (1951), the male and female halves of the world suddenly disengage although they maintain simultaneous existences. As a result men must learn how to do "women's" work and women must learn to do "men's" work. They do learn, although not always using the techniques the opposite sex used. In the same way, the work force can only benefit from a fresh look at the way work is accomplished.

Recently, the contribution of education and training to sex segregation in the work force has been emphasized. Vocational education programs in particular have contributed to sex segregation in the work force. In 1972, approximately 6,500,000 women were being trained in public vocational programs. Of that number 49 percent were enrolled in home economics programs and 28 percent in office practices programs (Roby, 1976). By 1975, the female enrollment in technical and trade and industrial areas had increased only 1 percent. At the same time male enrollment increased 13 percent in health and occupational home economics programs (U.S. Office of Education, 1977). While sex segregation is decreasing in vocational education, it appears to be broadening options for men rather than women.

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 (Federal Register, June 4, 1975) and the Education Amendments of 1976 (Federal Register, October 3, 1977) reflect a national concern over the segregation exemplified by these statistics. The legislation mandates the following: elimination of sex discrimination in admission to education and vocational education programs; the provision of funds to train counselors in dealing with special problems of women; and the training of vocational education teachers to overcome sex bias and stereotyping in the classroom. Clearly, vocational education is required by legislation to eliminate sex role stereotyping in training programs.

As the recent legislation clearly suggests, the guidance needs of women are issues for vocational educators, administrators, teachers, and researchers that must be determined so that women may take advantage of the opportunities provided under law. Women would not have special guidance needs if the problem were one of opportunity withheld on a political basis; in other words, the "haves" depriving the "have-nots" out of self-interest. Those individuals who perpetuate the external barriers which restrict women's opportunities are the ones in need of guidance. Since these external barriers do exist and are not easily legislated out of existence, they will be considered from the perspective of their effect on women clients. However, the internal barriers to women's achievement of educational and occupational success in nontraditional jobs will be the major concern of this paper. These more subtle internal barriers must be addressed by counselors at the same time the more obvious external barriers are being removed. Only then can maximum change occur in the experience of individual women and the overall character of the work force.

BACKGROUND FOR AN ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

Sex Differences

In order to understand the guidance needs of women it is important to understand how women differ from men in abilities, interests, motivation and personality, especially when these variables may affect their behavior in the work force. When Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) reviewed the literature they found some sex differences to be substantiated, others to be refuted, and still others to be inconclusive. The well-established sex differences which relate to vocational behavior include the following:

1. Girls have greater verbal skill than boys. The differences begin to appear at about age 11 and girls continue to improve their performance over boys at least through high school. Their superiority is not only related to verbal fluency, but also extends to complex verbal operations.

2. Boys excel in spatial and mathematical abilities. These differences also occur in preadolescence and persist at least through the high school years.

3. Boys are more aggressive than girls. This behavior can be observed very early in life and is observed over many cultures.

Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) have refuted several popular conceptions about sex differences related to vocational behavior as follows:

1. Neither boys nor girls are more socially oriented. There are no reliable differences in their interest in social interaction. Neither sex is demonstrably more dependent on others. Both sexes respond equally well to social reinforcement. However, boys do tend to interact with larger groups of peers, while girls tend to interact with smaller groups.

2. Neither boys nor girls have higher self-esteem except during the college years when women have less confidence in their ability to achieve and to control their fates. Girls tend to derive their self-esteem from perceived social strength and power.

3. Neither boys nor girls excel over the other at higher level cognitive and analytical tasks except when the task is a visual spatial one.

4. Boys do not have higher achievement motivation than girls except when there is an appeal to competitive motivation. Under neutral simuli girls appear to be more achievement oriented than boys. However, Lipman-Blumen and Leavitt (1977) have pointed out that adults satisfy their achievement needs in a variety of ways which range from vicarious achievement to direct achievement. Lipman-Blumen (1972) showed that vicarious

satisfaction in married women was correlated with lower educational aspirations and direct achievement satisfaction was correlated with higher educational aspirations.

Finally, the relevant variables identified by Maccoby and Jacklin as indeterminant on the basis of available evidence include:

1. Activity level
2. Competitiveness
3. Dominance
4. Compliance

The first three appear to be more typical of boys but only under certain conditions and not in all studies. Compliance also appears to be situational with girls being more compliant to adults and boys to peers.

Johansson and Harmon (1972) have pointed out that men and women respond in significantly different ways to about 50 percent of the items on the Strong Vocational Inventory, most of which register vocational preferences directly. Gottfredson and Holland (1975) demonstrated that men are more likely to have "realistic" and "enterprising" interests while women are more likely to have "social" and "aesthetic" interests.

The Development of Sex Differences

Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) report two examples of sex differences which seem to have a biological basis. Aggressive behavior is apparently related to the presence of androgens, the male hormones. In subhuman species the administration of prenatal androgen as well as postnatal androgen increases aggressive postnatal behavior in both sexes. There is some evidence that more aggressive males have higher androgen levels. On the other hand, social learning theories (that is that girls and boys are reinforced for different forms of aggression or that girls are punished more for aggressive behavior) do not adequately explain aggressive behavior. The second example of biological differences is the visual spatial superiority of boys which is apparently partially determined by a recessive sex-linked gene. About 50 percent of men but only 25 percent of women are affected by it. However, practice is also involved in the development of spatial skills. Maccoby and Jacklin also dispute the effect of identification with same sex parents in the development of psychological differences between the sexes.

The psychoanalytic view stresses the importance of the identification of the child with the same sex parent in the development of sex-typed behaviors, but Maccoby and Jacklin comment that children are no more similiar to their own same sex parents than they are to other adults of the same sex. The social reinforcement theory leads to the supposition that either parents or others reinforce children more for behavior "appropriate" to their sex. Maccoby and Jacklin conclude that:

> Parents seem to treat a child in accordance with their knowledge of his individual temperament, interests, and abilities rather than in terms of sex-role stereotypes. We suspect that others who do not know the child well as an individual are more likely to react to him according to their stereotyped views of what a child of a given sex is likely to be like. Although this conclusion runs counter to common sense, it appears that relative strangers exert more stereotyping pressure on children than their own parents do. (p. 362)

The idea that children are reinforced more for imitating same sex models and that they learn to inhibit "inappropriate" behaviors is part of the social learning theory. Maccoby and Jacklin point out that children's sex-typed behavior is different from that of adults, in that it is play oriented and that children do not imitate the same sex models at early ages even when their behavior is clearly sex-typed. Kohlberg (1966) points out that the imitative behavior of the child is self-selected and screened through a set of distorted rules which he or she derives from childish perceptions. Thus, the child selects behaviors in a way which may be more stereotyped than those of any available role model at a time when both gender identity and concepts of "appropriate" behavior may be in formulation and changing. In a sense, the child is self-reinforcing.

In every case of sex difference, except in the development of aggression, some form of learning is important. Even in Kohlberg's approach, the rules deduced by the child depend to some extent on the surrounding social environment. Money and Ehrhardt (1972) have indicated that even children with genetic sex types opposite to their physical appearance can successfully develop a gender identity contrary to their genetic sex if they are treated early and consistently as a member of the desired but incorrect sex. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) have also reviewed other sex differences and sex roles that are presumably learned and the theories that explain how this learning occurs. Clearly, learning is important in developing sex-typed behaviors. If it were not, we would have to assume that the sex stereotyping of occupations was somehow immutably foreordained and forego our interest in changing the situation through interventions in counseling women or in changing their environment.

Developmental Models

Psychologists tend to conceptualize models of human development in terms of hierarchical stages through which each individual is believed to pass in a fixed sequence. These stages usually bear some relationship to age at the basic levels but not at the upper levels.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow (1970) has postulated that individuals have a hierarchy of basic needs. While his approach is not usually presented as a developmental model, Harmon (1977) has shown the relationship to career development. Maslow believes that

the most basic needs are physiological, that is, food and water. After these needs are satisfied, safety needs for order and predictability in life emerge. When an individual feels relatively safe, needs for belonging and love emerge. These are not sexual needs but needs to be part of an intimate group. Having satisfied these needs an individual will turn to the fulfillment of needs for self-esteem, self-confidence, and adequacy. Finally, if all the preceding needs are fulfilled, the need for self-actualization, to grow and reach personal potential, is activated.

People obviously work to meet their needs and it is quite different to counsel a client who is trying to meet physiological or safety needs than to counsel one who is trying to meet needs for self-esteem. Many of the traditional counseling strategies are based on assumptions that people attempt to fill higher order needs through work. However, the assumption that people need work which provides self-esteem and a chance for personal growth is not relevant to the experience of an individual whose family is not adequately fed and housed. Counselors reduce their effectiveness by assuming that work fills a higher order need when health and safety needs are not met first.

An Adaptation of Perry's Model of Cognitive Development

Knefelkamp, Widick, and Stroad (1978) have published a modification of Perry's (1970) model of cognitive development which is directly related to the counseling needs of women.

Perry has conceptualized a theory of cognitive development that has nine stages. Each represents a different and increasingly complex way of understanding knowledge and the process of learning. Students at various stages have been shown to respond to different instructional techniques (Widick, 1974). Knefelkamp and his associates have pointed out that the theory can be applied to various areas of cognitive content and have applied it to woman's thinking about herself and her role in society by postulating three categories of stages.

1. The first category is characterized by dualism. The woman thinks in "either/or" terms about the role of women. She believes that there is a "right" and a "wrong" role for women which is justified by some source of external truth.

2. The second set of stages is characterized by relativism. The woman realizes that truth is relative and related to the context of an individual's experience. Unfortunately, this can be an unsettling experience when the old absolutes and external authorities have lost their comforting domination over the woman's thinking and there is nothing to take their place.

3. The third set of stages is characterized by commitment in relativism. The woman gradually accepts her responsibility to recognize her own identity in a world where there are no absolutes. In the highest stage, a woman is able to recognize and integrate intrapersonal conflicts as part of her own identity. She commits herself to her own values and lifestyle.

A woman who is in a stage of relativism will conceptualize her role quite differently from a woman who is in a stage of commitment. Counselors must be aware of their client's level of cognitive development.

Super's Theory of Career Development

Super (1963a) has pointed out that the vocational decision making of an individual is related to that individual's vocational self-concept and stage of development. According to Super, the vocational self-concept is developed through a process of identification with parents and others of the same sex, role playing, and reality testing. Ordinarily the individual passes through sequential stages in his or her career development (Super, 1963b).

1. The first stage is crystallization, which usually occurs during ages 14 to 18. In this stage the individual must formulate a generalized preference for a type of vocation. In order to do so, the individual must be aware of a need to plan, aware of his or her own personality characteristics, and aware of external factors affecting his or her choice. In addition, the individual must utilize a rational approach to vocational decision making.

2. The second stage is specification, which normally occurs during ages 18 to 21. It requires that the individual utilize the knowledge and process from the crystallization stage to declare a more specific choice and plan to prepare for its implementation through education and/or training.

3. The third stage is implementation, which normally occurs during the ages 21 to 24. It requires that the individual actually implement a vocational choice and ultimately a job.

4. The two remaining stages, stabilization, which occurs during the ages 25 to 35 and consolidation, which occurs after 35, require that the individual establish and accept a stable position or accept instability and prepare for advancement or senior stature.

Crites' (1973) Measure of Career Maturity

Some findings using this measure suggest that girls are more mature in their career outlook than boys in the same grades in school (Harmon and Krueger, 1975; Herr and Enderlein, 1976; Smith and Herr, 1972). The placement of an individual in Super's stages and the maturity in vocational decision making are important considerations for counselors. These examples of developmental models can help in understanding the guidance needs of women and ways of meeting them.

THE GUIDANCE NEEDS OF WOMEN

Internal Barriers to Utilizing Equal Opportunity

Although women are not equally represented in all areas and levels of the work force, there are few documented differences in the abilities of males and females. Such differences that do exist are amenable to training, even those which are gentically determined. In addition, the documented differences are not great enough to support sweeping generalizations, such as "all women are incompetent in mathematics." The fact is that many women are competent in mathematics, but proportionately more men are competent in this area than women. Differences in ability cannot account completely for sex stereotyping in vocational behavior.

The major personality differences between males and females is in aggression, which is not adaptive for either sex in most vocational situations. Males are more active, competitive and dominant in work environments. Interestingly, the presence of other males seems to enhance the appearance of these behaviors. On the other hand, women tend to express their needs for achievement in less competitive and more indirect ways than men. The question often asked is, "Can effective work in our society be accomplished without high levels of activity, competition, and dominance?" There is no simple answer within our present highly competitive society.

Unfortunately, the period when young people are traditionally called upon to make educational and vocational plans and decisions coincides with a period of heightened uncertainty and self-doubt in women's lives. Assessment of maturity shows that high school age women understand good vocational planning. Yet the evidence of work force participation shows that they often fail to implement it.

What factors account for the discrepancy between women's abilities and their achievements in the vocational arena? Two of the developmental theories mentioned previously illustrate how it has occurred. Super has pointed out the centrality of the vocational self-concept and the importance of identification with the same sex parent and others in developing the self-concept for all vocational development. Consequently, the problem may be in the development of the vocational self-concept of women. The scarcity of female role models who work, or who work in nontraditional areas, may provide a partial explanation. Women who are interested in careers and enter nontraditional or pioneering occupations tend to have working mothers (Tangri, 1972; Almquist and Angrist, 1971).

Erickson (1977) has shown that, when researchers interviewed adolescent girls and discussed their lives, the discussions contributed to the moral and ego development of the girls. One task of the counselor and the administrator is to seek out role models and help young women use them.

In Knefelkamp's application of the Perry model to the cognitive development of women's role conceptualization, the dualistic conception might also explain what keeps women from implementing their potential. If a women believes that there is a right and wrong role for her and that "right" is established somewhere outside herself, she is dependent for her role definition on the culture in which she is immersed. Kohlberg's conceptualization would suggest that she might learn a more stereotyped role than the surrounding culture implies because she learns it at a time when her cognitions are distorted by childish perceptions. This reasoning might explain why Hawley (1971) found that college women perceived more rigid attitudes towards women's role among college men than college men actually displayed.

How can the vocational self-concept of women be changed so that they will take advantage of equal opportunities? According to Knefelkamp, women's self-concept or role concepts need to allow for the existence of multiple roles without dualistic "either/or" thinking. A woman needs to be aware that being a wife and mother does not exclude being a worker, and that working in fields which have been male-dominated does not exclude positive personality charcteristics such as warmth, expressiveness, and sensitivity, which have been considered to be feminine. Competence and femininity are not mutually exclusive. The fear of success which Horner (1969) has documented among women is based on the kind of dualistic thinking Knefelkamp describes. The woman who fears success seems to perceive that by succeeding she will lose the approval of society and those around her. While this fear may be well-founded, it creates the internal barrier which is discussed here.

Knefelkamp and associates indicate that it is important to determine the stage of cognitive development of women's role for each client. Clients must move through the stages sequentially. It is impossible to move a client from the dualistic mode to the mode of commitment within relativism without going through the relativistic mode. To attempt to challenge a client's dualistic conceptualizations and transform them quickly and painlessly to commitments will not work. The client will either accept the counselor's challenges as pronouncements and incorporate them into a dualistic system or leave counseling. The counselor must present conceptual material which will challenge the client's dualistic conceptions and lead her to the painful and confusing stage of relativism. The counselor's task is to promote relativistic thinking with all its uncertainties. Only on that basis can the client go on to commitment within relativism. Some women will develop an identity which defines their role as that of homemaker, others as vocational pioneer. The difference between vocational choice based on dualistic or committed conceptualizations is that the latter incorporates a sense of choice based on an internal and highly personal sense of identity without external control. It is important to note that this approach is based on work with college students and adolescents, but it is probably also relevant to younger and older women.

After a vocational self-concept is available to women, Super suggests that an assessment should be made of interests, values, and the status of the world of work. These assessments require a rudimentary vocational self-concept to serve as an orienting factor. Thus, all the guidance activities used by counselors, such as the measurement of interests, values, and implementation of

programs to increase the client's awareness of the world of work, must wait for the development of a vocational self-concept. Such assessments are important and may lead to realistic plans for skill building in areas which traditionally present problems for women, but only after a vocational self-concept is established. For example, Fennema (1974) suggests that the counselor should prescribe programs to teach mathematic skills in order to reduce the anxiety which often accompanies the study of mathematics. In addition, guidance counselors should work to increase the number of women who receive routine training in these skills at the junior high or high school level. The same recommendations apply to the development of skills in handling spatial relationships.

The problem of low self-esteem among young college age and older women who have had similar experiences may be reduced by the development of a vocational self-concept based on commitment within relativism. However, it is also important to help women find support groups that can reinforce their developing self-concepts. For significant numbers of women, especially those who have not had to meet their own physiological and safety needs, the need for belonging and love is difficult to fulfill in a manner which results in a smooth transition to the self-esteem need in Maslow's hierarchy. In many ways, a woman who wants to be competent and achieving may be considered an outsider among women and a challenge to the men in her life. It is possible that the more competent she is, the more she will expect to be unacceptable. This concept has a reverse effect on men. The more competent and achieving a man is, the more he will be loved and accepted by all the important others in his life. A woman at this point may need a considerable amount of support. The best strategy a counselor, teacher, or administrator can use is to encourage the formation of groups of women with similar interests which will serve as support systems for their members. Within such groups a woman can discuss her neighbor's disapproval of her new but nontraditional plans and be reassured by others who have had the same experience.

A woman who has developed a vocational self-concept and reached the stage of specification as outlined by Super may be able to discuss with her counselor certain personal limitations which may influence her vocational choice or performance. Many women do not have certain skills which are useful in the world of work, such as the ability to be assertive when assertiveness is required, (Jakubowski, 1978) or to be decisive when decisiveness is required. The counselor should recognize that these skills are necessary to gain self-esteem and the esteem of colleagues. The needs they fulfill are at the higher level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The counselor can either develop an individualized plan for helping the woman client to develop these skills utilizing her own experiences or establish a group of women with the same problems using structured stimulus materials. Often, the latter is desirable because it allows each client to meet others who share their problems and hastens the progress toward constructive behavior change.

In summary, it is important to assess the developmental status of women clients before attempting to help them. The counselor should be able to recognize:

1. where the client stands in her thinking about her role as a woman (dualistic, relativistic, or committed within relativism)

2. whether she has developed a vocational self-concept
3. at what level of career development she is operating
4. what needs she is attempting to meet through work

The effect of age, race, and socioeconomic class of the client must also be understood. However, as many women require help in developing their self-concepts (both as women and as workers) as need assistance in developing their skill assessment and skill development.

External Barriers to Utilizing Equal Opportunity

If Kohlberg is correct and individuals learn sex appropriate behaviors through their own immature phenomenological impressions, then the external barriers are all the attitudes of society which the young child accepts and accentuates. These attitudes are communicated interpersonally and in written and visual form. The most important external barriers related to the counseling process are discussed here, since counselors can most easily change that segment of society in which they participate.

It has been well documented that counselors tend to react differently to males and females. They have differential behavior expectations for psychologically healthy males and females, with their expectations for males being labeled "more adult" (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Carlson, and Rosenkrantz, 1972). They react differently to career choices of females and males (Schlossberg and Pietrofisa, 1973; Thomas and Stewart, 1971). They utilize test information differently depending on the sex of the client (Friedersdorf, 1969). They are not well informed about women and work (Bingham and House, 1973). Counselors must assess their own attitudes, knowledge and techniques to avoid setting up barriers for women who are at a developmental stage where they are considering new and often nontraditional options.

It has been documented that many career information materials have portrayed men and women differently, both verbally and visually. Birk, Cooper, and Tanney (1973); Birk (n.d.); and Tanney (n.d.) have discussed the deleterious message often communicated to women clients in interest test materials and in the interpretations counselors make based on test manuals and interpretative materials.

The most subtle problem in the counseling of women is how counselors can present the real barriers which do exist in the world of work and in the wife and mother role. These barriers include overt and subtle discrimination in hiring; on the job harassment and undermining; discrimination in pay, duties, training and promotion as well as the competing demands of home and family responsibilities. It is the counselor's job to help the women client assess how she might cope with these problems without discouraging her from attempting to take new and rewarding job roles. The following recommendations are made to help not only counselors, but also teachers, administrators, and researchers in understanding and meeting the guidance needs of women.

For Counselors

Counselors in vocational education should:

1. Inform themselves of the facts of women's employment

2. Confront their own biases in formal training experiences and informal discussions

3. Challenge the developers of counseling, career information, and testing materials to eliminate sex stereotyping in their products

4. Assess the developmental status of their women clients and work on basic problems of self-definition, and motivation before providing career materials, testing, and career education experiences

5. Encourage females, especially those at the junior high level, to enter basic courses in mathematics and science and to keep their options open when they are ready to make choices

6. Develop and implement support groups for women facing common problems

7. Develop and implement programs to develop specific personal skills which are useful in the work force, such as assertiveness training, decision-making strategies, and time management techniques

8. Develop effective ways to initiate recognition of real barriers in home, educational process, and the work place without discouraging the career exploration of women clients

For Teachers

Teachers perform many guidance functions and serve as role models. Recommendations one, two, six, and eight for counselors also apply to teachers. In addition, teachers should:

1. Be aware that women students may need special help in areas involving mathematics, spatial skills, or the application of physical force

2. Be aware that many women students in vocational education programs lack confidence in their skills and ability to control their lives. Reinforcement can increase their sense of control over their lives and careers by increasing the control of their own learning process

3. Encourage both sexes within a classroom to explore the perceptions and work styles of the other by encouraging classroom cooperation between the sexes rather than competition

4. Challenge the developers of curricular materials which give the impression that vocational roles for women are limited because of sex

For Administrators

Administrators must facilitate better guidance and counseling practices in the educational institution by a personal commitment to equal opportunity for women in education and the work force. They must also encourage counselors and teachers through formal programming for inservice development as well as an informal emphasis on the importance of active solutions to the problems of equal opportunity for women.

For Researchers

It is important that researchers work closely with administrators, counselors, and teachers to assess the strategies designed to meet the guidance needs of girls and women. It is most important to be able to determine what does increase women's participation in the whole range of occupations in our society. It is equally important to determine what does not work, to avoid investing time and resources in useless or even harmful strategies. To do so involves a degree of control over what happens to the woman student or client and when it happens, which can seldom be gained after the fact. It is vitally important that research and evaluation be planned at the same time as the interventions so that a maximum of information can be obtained.

Employment statistics, needs of the vocational marketplace and the Educational Amendments of 1976 have set up a challenge to vocational educators to encourage girls and women to accept the educational and vocational opportunities which are currently offered to them. Meeting that challenge successfully will change the lives of women and the work place itself.

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